

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Wilkinson Manufacturing

Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex)

New Facility Layout Leads to Improved Productivity and Profitability for Wilkinson Manufacturing

Client Profile:

Wilkinson Manufacturing is a precision machine shop (metals and plastics) providing product development, prototyping, short-run production and full production services to customers in the building and semiconductor industries. The company employs 11 people at its facility in Santa Clara, California.

Situation:

Wilkinson Manufacturing wanted to move to a larger facility to provide the opportunity for a more functional layout and room for growth, along with projecting a more professional image to current and prospective customers. The company engaged the Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to assist in reaching their objectives for this new facility with a specific focus on optimizing "flow" and work cell layout in the receiving/shipping and production areas; improving workplace organization; improving consistency of operations, productivity and quality/yield; providing a foundational understanding and initial implementation of Lean manufacturing principles; and developing the required foundation for future ISO certification and compliance efforts.

Solution:

Manex worked with Wilkinson Manufacturing using a holistic, systematic approach to identify and implement operational process improvements leading to an efficient flow for the new facility. Key elements of this approach included recommendations for improved processes and flow for new plant and work cell layout, 5S training, a pre-move "red tag" event to identify unneeded materials and equipment to minimize amount of gear moved, and the creation and implementation of standardized work and workforce organization tools. This comprehensive workplace organization, layout and workforce development project has led to improved productivity and profitability. The layout was methodically designed and optimized using a thorough and extensive analysis of work processes. Continuous, efficient flow patterns of materials, personnel and information were implemented using consistent and repeatable processes.

Results:

- * Increased throughput by 30 percent.
- * Reduced labor costs by 20 percent.
- * Invested \$44,000 in workforce development.

Testimonial:

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"Thanks to Manex's help, we've been able to become more productive by instilling a new discipline to optimize our layout and processes. It was a great effort, and we expect it to pay off for many years to come."

Doug Greene, President